Śaṅkara's Date: Investigating Internal Evidence

Dr. H. N. Shankar and V. Subrahmanian

1. Introduction

Śaṅkara-bhagavatpāda's period has been a matter of dispute and dates ranging from the sixth century BC to the ninth century AD have been proposed. The subject has been approached from various angles – biographies; epigraphic data; institutional records; genealogical lists in the *Purāṇas* and elsewhere; references and citations in the works of Bhagavatpāda and his disciples; and references in other works to those of Bhagavatpāda and his disciples.

In view of the undisputed importance of internal evidence, this article objectively scrutinizes some of it. To be specific, the following are considered and their pertinence to Bhagavatpāda's period evaluated.

(i) The mention of the coin called *kārṣāpaṇa* in Bhagavatpāda's *bhāṣyas*.

(ii) Some passages about Buddhists in Bhagavatpāda's *Brahmasūtra-bhāṣya* and *Upadeśa-sāhasrī* and in Sureśvarācārya's *Bṛhadāraṇyaka-bhāṣya-vārtika.*

2.1 Bhagavatpāda's Mention of the Coin Called *Kārṣāpaṇa* in His *Bhāṣyas*

(a) The *Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad* teaches:

so'yamātmā catuṣpāt | (*Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad* 2)

[This *Ātman*, which is as has been described, has four quarters.]

Bhagavatpāda's commentary on this is, in part:

so'yam-ātmā oṅkārābhidheyaḥ parāparatvena vyavasthitaḥ catuṣpāt, kārṣāpaṇavat… |

[This aforesaid *Ātman*, which is signified by *'Om'* and exists as the higher and the lower *Brahman*, has four quarters (*pādas*), like a *kārṣāpaṇa*…]

(b) Sage Bādarāyaṇa has aphorised:

buddhyarthaḥ pādavat | (*Brahma-sūtra* 3.2.33)

[For comprehension (Brahman is spoken of as having size) like the '*pādas* (feet or quarters)'.]

Bhagavatpāda has elucidated this aphorism in two ways in his *Brahmasūtra-bhāṣya.* His second explanation is as follows:

athavā pādavad-iti – yathā kārṣāpaṇe pāda-vibhāgo vyavahāra-prācuryāya kalpate | na hi sakalenaiva kārṣāpaṇena sarvadā sarve janāḥ vyavahartum-īśate | kraya-vikraye parimāṇāni-yamāt, tadvad-ityarthaḥ |

[Alternatively, '*pādavat'* means 'like quarters'. Just as in the case of the *kārṣāpaṇa,* it is taken to be divided into four quarters in order to facilitate transactions since not all seek to use the whole *kārṣāpaṇa* in every trading activity as the quantum in buying and selling is not invariant, likewise here (*Brahman's* size is conceived of for the sake of contemplation).]

2.2 Conjectured Link Between Bhagavatpāda's Mention of *Kārṣāpaṇa* and His Period

A supporter of the claim that Bhagavatpāda was born centuries before the start of Christian era has written, "Explaining Brahman, in Mandukya Upanishad Bhashya, Adi Sankara uses the term, Karshapana, which referred to a coin in vogue in his times. Karshapanam was used as a unit of monetary exchange all over Bharat between 6th century BCE and 2nd Century A.D. Hence, the date of Sankara in all probability, should be within this period." Another backer of the aforesaid claim has, with reference to Bhagavatpāda's mentioning the *kārṣāpaṇa* while expounding the *Māṇḍukya Upanisad*, contended, "Proffered for facilitating easy comprehension by all, the *kārṣāpaṇa*-illustration bears testimony to the *kārṣāpaṇa* being current in Bhagavatpāda's time. Scholars of ancient history have held that the *kārṣāpaṇa* coinage was in vogue in India from eight centuries before Christ to the time of Candragupta Maurya [Translated from Sanskrit]."

There are, however, grounds that demonstrate that Bhagavatpāda's period cannot be arrived at thus from his reference to the *kārṣāpaṇa* coin.

2.3 Mention of *Kārṣāpaṇa* in Various Texts and the Implication of Its Being Well-known

The mention of *kārṣāpaṇa* by way of illustration need not be confined to the period when this coin was current. This is because it is something well-known, it having been spoken of in the *Veda, Smṛti* and *Purāṇa* themselves as also in authoritative scriptural treatises, in traditional *kośas* and in the literature.

(a) Says the *Sāmavidhāna-brāḥmaṇa* of the *Sāma-veda:*

vyuṣṭāyāṁ rātrau bhūtau pañca hāsya kārṣāpaṇā bhavanti vyayakṛtāśca punarāyanti mūlam-aśūnyaṁ kuryāt … | (3.3.7)

[At the close of the night, two spirits (appear before him) and he acquires five *kārṣāpaṇas*. On being spent, these recur. A fraction of the original amount must be retained unspent.]

This *Vedic* passage has been elucidated thus in Sāyaṇa's esteemed commentary, *Vedārtha-prakāśa:*

atha bhūta-vaśīkaraṇa-labhya-dhana-sādhana-prayogam-āha … rātrau vyuṣṭāyāṁ satyāṁ hau [dvau?] bhūtau paśyati / tayor-hastāt asya pañca kārṣāpaṇā bhavanti / bhūtau tān prayacchata ityarthaḥ | te ca kṛtavyayāḥ punarāyanti | teṣu madhye mūlaṁ kiñcit aśūnyaṁ kuryāt ava-śeṣayet | mūlāṁśaṁ sthāpayitvā śiṣṭaṁ viniyuñjīta | tathā saty-avaśeṣito mūlāṁśo vyaya-kṛtam-aṁśam tasmāt punaḥ ākarṣati ityarthaḥ |

[Hereafter, the procedure for acquiring wealth by means of subjugating spirits is spoken of… Upon the passing of the night, he sees two spirits. From their hands, he obtains five *kārṣāpaṇas*. On being spent, the *kārṣāpaṇas* return to him. (For that purpose,) a fraction thereof must be kept unspent. Having set aside that part, the remaining may be disbursed. The purport is that the portion so retained draws back what was spent.]

(b) It is said in the *Manusmṛti:*

kārṣāpaṇas-tu vijñeyas-tāmrikaḥ kārṣikaḥ paṇaḥ | (8.136).

[It should be understood that a copper *paṇa* weighing one *kārṣa* is a *kārṣāpaṇa*.]

(c) The *Agni-purāṇa* states:

tāmrikaḥ kārṣiko rāma proktaḥ kārṣāpaṇo budhaiḥ / (227.4)

[O Rāma, the knowledgeable speak of a copper *kārṣa* as a *kārṣāpaṇa*.]

(d) In the Sage Pāṇini's *Aṣṭādhyāyī*, '*kārṣāpaṇa'* finds mention in the following aphorism:

vibhāṣā kārṣāpaṇa-sahasrābhyāṁ / (5.1.29)

[The '*taddhita '* suffix is not always in respect of enumeration; it may be optionally elided when in conjunction with the words '*kārṣāpaṇa'* and '*sahasra'*.]

Moreover, the word '*kārṣāpaṇa* ' is included in the '*Gaṇa-pāṭha'* of Sage Pāṇini under the head '*ardhaṛcādi'.* This group has been referred to in the following aphorism:

ardhaṛcāḥ puṁsi ca / (2.4.31)

[The words '*ardhaṛca* ' etc., are spoken of in the neuter gender and in the masculine gender.]

Sage Patañjali has illustrated the aforesaid rule as follows in his authoritative *Mahābhāṣya:*

ardhaṛcaṁ, ardhaṛcaḥ / *kārṣāpaṇaṁ , kārṣāpaṇaḥ* /

[*'Ardhaṛcaṁ'* (the word *'ardhaṛca'* in neuter gender); *'ardhaṛcaḥ'* (in masculine gender). *'Kārṣāpaṇaṁ'* (the word *'kārṣāpaṇa'* in neuter gender); *'kārṣāpaṇaḥ'* (in masculine gender).]

Explaining the word '*pādavat* (like a quarter)' of Sage Jaimini's *Mīmāṁsā-sūtra* (6.7.20), Śabara-svāmin has (as done by Bhagavatpāda later when explaining Sage Bādarāyaṇa's use of the same word) proffered the *kārṣāpaṇa*-quarter example thus:

pādavat, yathā kārṣāpaṇe dīyamāne pādo datto bhavati evam-ihāpi / (6.7.20)

[*'Pādavat* (like a quarter)'. Just as when a *kārṣāpaṇa* is given, a quarter becomes given, so is it even here.]

(e) The word '*kārṣāpaṇa'* is recorded in various traditional Sanskrit lexicons. Thus, we have in the *Amara-kośa* :

kārṣāpaṇaḥ kārṣikaḥ syāt… / (2.9.88)

(*Kārṣāpaṇa* is synonymous with *kārṣika*.)

In the *Medinī-kośa*, we have:

kārṣāpaṇo'strī kārṣike paṇaṣoḍaśake'pi ca / (*Ṇānta* 93)

[The word *kārṣāpaṇa* is non-feminine, refers to a *kārṣika* and even to sixteen *paṇas*.]

(f) Daṇḍin's *Dasakumāracarita* provides an instance of the mention of *kārṣāpaṇa* in Sanskrit literature. We read therein:

ekām-api kākiṇīṁ kārṣāpaṇa-lakṣam-āpādayema / (2.8)

[We shall transform even a quarter of a *paṇa* into one hundred thousand *kārṣāpaṇas*.]

Sage Gautama has, while defining an 'illustration', unambiguously stated:

laukika-parīkṣakāṇāṁ yasminnarthe buddhi-sāmyaṁ sa dṛṣṭāntaḥ / (*Nyāya-sūtra* 1.1.25)

[An illustration is one about which the common folk and the investigators have a common understanding.]

Thus, for proffering an illustration, familiarity of the readers with what is being presented by way of analogy is what is needed and not that what is spoken of must be available. As seen, the *kārṣāpaṇa* is something well-known, it having been spoken of in the *Veda*, *Smṛti*, *Purāṇa*, authoritative scriptural treatises, in traditional lexicons and in Sanskrit literature. Hence, it cannot be justifiably avowed that since Bhagavatpāda has proffered the *kārṣāpaṇa*-example in his commentaries, this coin must have been in use in his time.

2.4 Mention of *Kārṣāpaṇa* by Writers Even After it Ceased to be in Currency

By virtue of its being well-known in the scripture and elsewhere, authors have, in fact, mentioned the *kārṣāpaṇa* in their illustrations even after this coin's cessation from circulation.

An aphorism of Sage Pāṇini is:

udupadhād-bhāvādikarmaṇor-anyatarasyāṁ / (1.2.21)

[By virtue of a verbal root with the non-heavy vowel '*u* ' in the penultimate position, there are alternative forms when referring to the 'principal sense' and to the 'first act'.]

The word *'kārṣāpaṇa'* does not find a place in this aphorism and in Sage Patañjali's exposition of it in his *Mahābhāṣya.* Nevertheless, of his own accord, Bhaṭṭoji-dīkṣita has included it as follows when explaining this aphorism in his much-studied *Siddhānta-kaumudī:*

…bhāva ityādi kim? rucitaṁ kārṣāpaṇam /

[What is the specific purpose served by the qualifiers, 'to the 'principal sense' and to the 'first act'? (A case which may be taken note of is) '*rucitaṁ* (bright) *kārṣāpaṇam'* (Here, though stemming from the verb root '*ruc* ' which has a non-heavy vowel '*u* ' in the penultimate position, the form taken is '*rucitaṁ* ' and not '*rocitaṁ* ').]

It is pertinent that the key word of the example is just '*rucitaṁ* (shining)' and there would have been no lacuna even if the said adjective had not been followed up by the noun '*kārṣāpaṇam'* (to convey 'shining *kārṣāpaṇa'*) or if a word such as '*ābharaṇaṁ* (ornament)' had been used in the place of *'kārṣāpaṇam'*.

Bhaṭṭoji-dīkṣita was born in the sixteenth century of the *Vikramaśaka* and it is beyond any dispute that the *kārṣāpaṇa* had, as a currency, ceased to be in circulation long before his birth. Nonetheless, as seen, he has mentioned *kārṣāpaṇa* and that too purely of his own accord. This is one instance of authors referring to the *kārṣāpaṇa* in their works even much after this coin had ceased to be in use.

Here is one more example. Upaniṣad-brahmayogin, who has penned glosses on all the 108 *Upaniṣads*, has expatiated as follows on the teaching of the *Māṇḍūkya-upaniṣad* about the *Ātman* having four *pādas* (quarters):

ayam-ātmā brahma iti nirdiṣṭa-pratyagabhinna-paramātmanaḥ kārṣāpaṇavat catuṣpāttvaṁ vyaktīkaroti so'yamātmā iti | ṣoḍaśāvayava-viśiṣtatvaṁ kārṣāpaṇatvaṁ | na hi gaurivāyam catuṣpād bhavati | svājñadṛṣṭyā vyaṣṭi-samaṣṭi-tadaikyopādhyabhimānataḥ viśva-viśva-viraḍ-virāḍotrotrādi-bhedena tripañcadaśapād-ayamātmā bhavati ityarthaḥ |

[The Supreme Self, which is non-different from the innermost Self and was specified in the declaration, 'This (individual) Self is Brahman', is explained, in the portion 'This very Self…' as having four *pādas* like a *kārṣāpaṇa.* The characteristic of the *kārṣāpaṇa* is that it is made up of sixteen parts. This Self is not possessed of four legs (*pādas*) like a cow. The idea is that from the point of view of one's own ignorance, this Self becomes possessed of eighteen parts by virtue of identification with the adjuncts of the individual and the aggregate, differentiated as *viśva-viśva*, *virāṭ-virāṭ*, *otṛ*, etc.]

It would have been noted that Upaniṣad-brahmayogin's explanation is partially different from that of Bhagavatpāda. Further, in his glosses, he has sometimes presented examples other than those given by Bhagavatpāda. Yet, here, he has chosen to explain the *Ātman's* being four-quartered through the *kārṣāpaṇa* analogy. Upaniṣad-brahmayogin flourished in the 18th century (- from his words at the close of his gloss on the *Muktika Upaniṣad*, it is discernible that he completed this work on 17.12.1751 -) and thus lived long after the *kārṣāpaṇa* had ceased to be in use.

2.5 *Kārṣāpaṇa* Coins Used Even Long After the Start of the Christian Era

According to an inscription of Nasik of the time of the Śaka-satrap Nahapāna (119-124 AD), his son-in-law Usavadāta permanently deposited 2000 *kārṣāpaṇas* with two weavers' guilds *(Epigraphica Indica*, Vol. 8, p. 82; D. C. Sircar, *Select Inscriptions*, Vol. 1, p. 157). A *kārṣāpaṇa* of Vijayasena (240-250 AD) having a Greek inscription on one side and a legend in Sanskrit on the other has been studied and its photographs published (Prasanna Rao Bandela, *Coin Splendour: A Journey into the Past*, 2003, p. 56). D. R. Bhandarkar, a renowned epigraphist, has, after providing data, pointed out, "No reasonable doubt can therefore be entertained as to Karshāpaṇa having continued to circulate up to the seventh century (D. R. Bhandarkar, *Lectures on Ancient Indian Numismatics*, AES Reprint, 1990, p. 186)." Thus, even if it be unwarrantedly imagined that Bhagavatpāda must have referred to the *kārṣāpaṇa* only when the coin was in use, still, it cannot be concluded on this ground whether he lived centuries before or after the start of the Christian era.

3. Bhagavatpāda's Citing the Buddhist Logician Diṅnāga in the *Brahmasūtra-bhāṣya*

Sage Bādarāyaṇa has aphorised:

nābhāva upalabdheḥ | (*Brahmasūtra* 2.2.28)

[(External objects are) not non-existent, owing to their being perceived.]

That this is aimed at refuting a Buddhist view is undisputedly acknowledged. In the course of his exposition of this aphorism, Bhagavatpāda has written in his *Brahmasūtra-bhāṣya:*

upalabdhi-viṣayatvenaiva tu stambha-kuḍyādīn sarve laukikā upalabhyante | ataścaivam-eva

sarve laukikā upalabhyante, yat-pratyācakṣāṇā api bāhyam-artham-evam-ācakṣate 'yad-antar-jñeyarūpaṁ tad-bahirvad-avabhāsate' iti | te'pi sarvaloka-prasiddhāṁ bahir-avabhāsamānāṁ saṁvidaṁ pratilabhamānāḥ pratyākhyātukāmāśca bāhyam-arthaṁ bahirvad-iti vatkāraṁ kurvanti | itarathā hi kasmāt bahirvad-iti brūyuḥ? na hi viṣṇumitro vandhyāputravad-avabhāsata iti kaścid-ācakṣīta | tasmād-yathānubhavaṁ tattvam-abhyupagacchadbhir-bahirevāvabhāsata iti yuktam-abhyupagantuṁ, na tu bahirvad-avabhāsata iti | (*Bhāṣya* on *Brahmasūtra* 2.2.28)

[On the other hand, all people cognize a pillar, a wall, etc., as objects of perception. And it is for this reason that all people likewise understand the antagonists (the Buddhists) also as indeed referring to an external object even as the latter attempt to negate it by claiming, 'The content of the form cognized within appears as if external'. They (the Buddhists) employ the phrase 'as if' in the clause 'as if external' as they experience what appears externally in the same way as is well known to all but wish to deny that external object. Else, why would they contend, 'as if external'? Indeed, nobody asserts, 'Viṣṇumitra appears like the son of a barren lady.' Therefore, it is only reasonable that those recognizing what is experienced to be the truth must admit that an object is, as seen, outside and not that it 'appears as if external'.]

That Bhagavatpāda was referencing a Buddhist assertion is patent, for he has said: '*ācakṣate* (they {the Buddhists} contend)', '*bahirvad-iti vatkāraṁ kurvanti* (they employ the phrase 'as if')' and '*kasmād-bahirvad-iti brūyuḥ* (why would they say 'as if external')'. Had the statement in question been that of Bhagavatpāda himself, these words of the *bhāṣya* would have been unbefitting. It is noteworthy that the portion '*yad-antarjñeyarūpam…avabhāsate'* specified (as the Buddhist's position) by Bhagavatpāda is not a prose-passage but one half (two *pādas*) of a verse in the *anuṣṭup* metre. So, it is clear that Bhagavatpāda was literally citing – not even just paraphrasing – a Buddhist work.

As what Bhagavatpāda has cited is one half of a verse in the *anuṣṭup* metre, the Buddhist work cited ought to be one that contains not only the cited portion in full but also the remaining half of the verse. The Buddhist work that fulfils this condition is the *Ālambana-parīkṣā* of Diṅnāga. Diṅnāga was a renowned Buddhist logician and *Ālambana-parīkṣā* is an authentic, short work of his comprising eight *kārikās*, on which he has penned a *vṛtti* (gloss) in prose. Dharmapāla and Vinītadeva have in their *ṭīkas* (commentaries) elucidated the verses as also Diṅnāga's explanatory passages. The sixth verse of the *Ālambana-parīkṣā* is one in which Diṅnāga has, after presenting and attacking others' views in the first five verses, stated his view. This *kārikā* is:

yadantar-jñeyarūpaṁ tu bahirvad-avabhāsate |

so'rtho vijñāna-rūpatvāt-tatpratyayatayā'pi ca || (*Ālambana-parīkṣā* 6)

[It is the object which exists internally in the knowledge itself as a knowable aspect which appears to us as if externally. Because that object is essentially of the nature of consciousness and because it acts as a condition (to the consciousness), the knowable aspect is the object.]

{The above translation is that given by N. Aiyaswami Sastri in *'The Alambana-Pariksa of Acarya Dignaga With Commentaries of Vinitadeva and Dharmapala and With Tibetan Texts'*, *Bulletin of Tibetology*, Nos. 1-3, 1980, p. 21.}

Certainly, *vijñāna-vāda*, with its claim that there is actually no external object and that the object is but its cognition, antedated Diṅnāga. However, what is pertinent here is only whether the half-verse that Bhagavatpāda cited and which is found in the *Ālambana-parīkṣā* along with the remaining half of the full verse is Diṅnāga's own composition or was picked from elsewhere by Diṅnāga. If the verse is that of Diṅnāga himself, then the inescapable conclusion is that Bhagavatpāda has cited Diṅnāga and, thus, cannot be rationally taken to have lived before Diṅnāga.

That the verse is a composition of Diṅnāga is certain, for neither Diṅnāga nor Dharmapāla or Vinītadeva has either stated or even remotely hinted that this verse or a part of it is a citation. As Dharmapāla and Vinītadeva have, in their commentaries, pointed out whenever Diṅnāga has quoted some passage, it cannot be contended that the *kārikā* in question was taken by Diṅnāga from some source but that this borrowing was ignored by the commentators. That the verse's author is none other than Diṅnāga is explicitly confirmed by the Buddhist scholar, Kamalaśīla who has stated as follows in his *Tattvasaṅgraha-pañjikā:*

ācarya-diṅgnāga-pādair-ālambana-pratyaya-vyavasthārtham-uktaṁ – 'yad-antar-jñeyarūpaṁ tu bahirvad-avabhāsate | so'rtho vijñana-rūpatvāt-tatpratyayatayā'pi ca' iti | (*Tattvasaṅgraha-pañjikā* 23.2081)

[With a view to determine the *ālambana* (basis) and *pratyaya* (causal condition), it has been stated thus by the revered teacher, Diṅnāga – '*yad-antarjñeyarūpaṁ … ca* (full verse quoted)'.]

In view of all this, it is definite that Bhagavatpāda has, in his *bhāṣya* on *Brahmasūtra* (2.2.28) that refutes Buddhism, cited the first half of the sixth *kārikā* of the *Ālambana-parīkṣā* of the famous Buddhist logician Diṅnāga. Incredibly, perhaps because of not having perused the texts concerned, an advocate of the view that Bhagavatpāda lived centuries before Christ has argued, 'If it be admitted that one has cited another, how can it be decided that Śaṅkarācārya was the one who referenced Diṅnāga…Why should it not be the other way around [Translated from Sanskrit]'; while another pair of writers has gone to the extent of conjecturing, 'The so-called "quotation"…might have as well been quoted *by* Kamalasila *from* the Sutrabhashya rather than the other way about'! Clearly these claims fly in the face of: (a) Bhagavatpāda's explicitly quoting, in full, one half of a verse in the *anuṣṭup* metre, with the prelude, 'they say' and proceeding to write 'They use the phrase *as if'* and 'Why would they say *as if external'* and (b) Kamalaśila quoting the verse in question with the prelude, 'It has been stated thus by the revered teacher, Diṅnāga.'

To conclude, since Bhagavatpāda has definitely cited verbatim half a verse from the renowned Buddhist logician Diṅnāga's *Ālambana-parīkṣā*, his period cannot be before that of Diṅnāga.

4.1 Bhagavatpāda's Citing the Buddhist Logician Dharmakīrti in the *Brahmasūtra-bhāṣya*

In his work *Pramāṇa-viniścaya*, the eminent Buddhist logician Dharmakīrti has said:

sahopalambha-niyamād-abhedo nīla-taddhiyoḥ | (*Pramāṇa-viniścaya* 1.53ab)

[Because of invariably being apprehended together, (the colour) blue and its perception are non-different.]

This has been cited in full or in part or paraphrased by several writers. Dharmottara has, in his commentary, *Pramāṇa-viniścaya-ṭīkā*, not said or even hinted that this verse has any author other than Dharmakīrti. On the contrary, considering '*sahopalambha-niyamād-abhedāh* (because of invariably being apprehended together, there is non-difference)' as Dharmakīrti's ground of inference, Dharmottara has clarified that by the word *'abhedaḥ'* here, the mere negation of the difference between the colour blue and its perception is conveyed and not identity between them. He has argued that if identity was meant, then, as the form (*ākāra*) of an object is false, the cognition of that form too would be false, and this is incorrect. Additional confirmation that *'sahopalambha-niyamāt* (due to invariably being experienced together)' was a reason advanced by Dharmakīrti comes from Jitāri's taking up Dharmakīrti's verse in his *Sugatamata-vibhaṅga-bhāṣya* and criticising Dharmottara's interpretation of the word '*abheda'* in it. Having presented his own interpretation, Jitāri expresses that that is what the '*ācārya* (Dharmakīrti)' meant and, subsequently, avers that the 'great intention of the *Vārtikakāra* ('the author of the *Vārtika'*, that is, Dharmakīrti, who penned the *Pramāṇa-vārtika*)' is that he who knows logic advocates that cognition has form. In view of all this, it is unmistakeable that according to the Buddhists, the verse in question is Dharmakīrti's own composition and '*sahopalambha-niyamāt* (because of invariably being experienced together)' is his specification of the ground for inferring the *'abheda'* between an object and its perception.

{What has been presented here about Dharmottara's interpretation and Jitāri's repudiation of it is based on Shiro Matsumoto's article *'On the Philosophical Positions of Dharmottara and Jitāri', Journal of Soto Sect Research Fellows,* 12*,* 1980.}

In his *Tattvasaṅgraha-pañjikā*, Kamalaśīla has, on occasions, referred to Diṅnāga as '*vṛddha-ācārya* (elder preceptor)' and to Dharmakīrti as '*ācārya* (preceptor)'. Expatiating on the portion of *Tattvasaṅgraha* in which the '*sahopalambha-niyamād*…' verse of Dharmakīrti's *Pramāṇa-viniścaya* has been plainly paraphrased, Kamalaśīla has written:

īdṛśa evācāryīye 'sahopalambha-niyamāt' ityādau prayoge hetvartho'bhipretaḥ |

(*Tattvasaṅgraha-pañjikā* 23.2029-2030)

[In the expressions of the *ācārya* such as '*sahopalambha-niyamāt* (because of invariably being apprehended together)', what is sought to be conveyed is the reason (the ground for inference).]

Kamalaśīla's speaking of '*sahopalambha-niyamāt* (because of invariably being apprehended together)' as the *ācārya's* specification of 'the ground for inference' is a pointer to the famed Buddhist logician Dharmakīrti being the author of the verse with this portion as its first quarter.

In his *Brahmasūtra-bhāṣya*, Bhagavatpāda has quoted verbatim from Dharmakīrti's *Pramāṇa-viniścaya* what the Buddhists themselves have clearly recognised as Dharmakīrti's own words and ground of inference. Bhagavatpāda has spelt out as follows that according to the Buddhists, '*sahopalambha-niyamād-abhedaḥ* (because of invariably being experienced together, there is non-difference)' between an object and its cognition:

api ca sahopalambha-niyamād-abhedo viṣaya-vijñānayor-āpatati | nahyanayor-ekasyānupalambhe anyasyopalambho'sti | na caitat-svabhāva-viveke yuktam, pratibandha-kāraṇābhāvat |

tasmād-apyarthābhāvaḥ |…evaṁ prāpte brūmaḥ 'nābhāva upalabdheḥ' iti |

(*Bhāṣya* on *Brahmasūtra* 2.2.28)

[Further, 'because of being invariably apprehended together, these is absence of difference (*sahopalambha-niyamād-abhedaḥ*)' between an object and its perception. Indeed, when one of the two is not experienced, the other too is not apprehended. Were the object and its knowledge to be innately disparate, there would not be this unfailing simultaneity of cognition, since, in that case, there would be nothing to preclude one of them being experienced without the other. For this reason too, there is no external object…This being the position (of the Buddhist idealist), we say, '(The external objects are) not non-existent, for they are perceived (*Brahma-sūtra* 2.2.28).']

Vācaspati-miśra and Ānandagiri have quoted Dharmakīrti's inference in full when explaining Bhagavatpāda's presentation of the Buddhist portion and, thus, confirmed that Bhagavatpāda was indeed referencing Dharmakīrti. The pertinent portion of Vācaspati-miśra's gloss *Bhāmatī* is:

api ca sahopalambha-niyamād-iti | yad-yena saha niyata-sahopalambhanaṁ tat-tato na bhidyate, yathaikasmāccandramaso dvitīyaścandramāḥ |…tad-uktaṁ 'sahopalambha-niyamād-abhedo nīla-taddhiyoḥ | bhedaśca bhrānti-vijñānairdṛśyetendāvivādvaye' iti (*Bhāmatī* on the *bhāṣya* on *Brahmasūtra* 2.2.28)

[(*Bhāṣya*:) Also, 'because of their being invariably experienced together'. Whatever is invariably experienced along with something is non-distinct from the latter, like the (misperceived) second moon from the sole moon. It has been said, 'Because of invariably being apprehended together, (the colour) blue and its perception are non-different. They are seen as different due to erroneous notions, as in the case of the single moon (being misperceived as two).']

Likewise, the relevant portion of Ānandagiri's sub-commentary, *Nyāya-nirṇaya*, is:

yad-yena niyata-sahopalambhanaṁ, tat-tenābhinnaṁ yathaikena candramasā dvitīyaścandra-māḥ … 'sahopalambha-niyamād-abhedo nīla-taddhiyoḥ | bhedaśca bhrāntivijñānair-dṛśyetendā-vivādvaye' ityuktam-upasaṁharati – tasmāditi | (*Nyāya-nirṇaya* on the *bhāṣya* on *Brahmasūtra* 2.2.28)

[What is invariably cognized with something is non-different from that, like the second moon from the sole moon…It has been said 'Because of invariably being apprehended together, (the colour) blue and its perception are non-different. They are seen as different due to erroneous notions, as in the case of the single moon (being misperceived as two)'. He (Bhagavatpāda) wraps up this statement thus: 'Therefore…']

That Bhagavatpāda was not just paraphrasing some Buddhist saying but was reproducing a key part of a verse of Dharmakīrti is confirmed even by the fact that Rāmānujācārya has cited this very verse when presenting and attacking the Buddhist position in his exposition of the *Brahmasūtra,* '*nābhava upalabdheḥ* (External objects are not non-existent, for they are perceived)'. Rāmānujācārya has written:

yattu 'sahopalambha-niyamād-abhedo nīla-taddhiyoh' iti, tat-svavacana-viruddhaṁ, sāhityasya arthabheda-hetukatvāt | (*Śrībhāṣhya* on *Brahmasūtra* 2.2.28)

[As to (the Buddhist opponent's claim), 'Because of invariably being apprehended together, (the colour) blue and its perception are non-different', that is self-contradictory, for 'togetherness (the purport of '*saha'*, the first word of Dharmakīrti's verse)' calls for distinction between the entities.]

That *sahopalambha-niyamād-abhedaḥ'* is a verbatim citation by Bhagavatpāda of Dharmakīrti is thus patent (a) from these words being the key part of a verse of Dharmakīrti's *Pramāṇa-viniścaya;* (b) from Buddhist writers accepting these as constituting an inference advanced by Dharmakīrti and not as some earlier Buddhist saying; (c) from Vācaspati-miśra and Ānandagiri citing the pertinent verse of Dharmakīrti when expatiating on this portion of Bhagavatpāda's *Brahmasūtra-bhāṣya* wherein Buddhist idealism is refuted and (d) from even Rāmānujācārya quoting this verse in the same context of the refutation of Buddhism. As Bhagavatpāda has definitely referenced Dharmakīrti in the *Brahmasūtra-bhāṣya*, his period cannot be before that of the Buddhist logician Dharmakīrti.

4.2 Bhagavatpāda's and Sureśvarācārya's Citation of a Complete Verse of Dharmakīrti

Among Dharmakīrti's seven undisputed works – *Pramāṇa-vārtika, Pramāṇa-viniścaya, Nyāya-bindu, Hetu-bindu, Vāda-nyāya, Sambandha-parīkṣā* and *Santānāntara-siddhi* – the foremost and biggest is *Pramāṇa-vārtika*, his gloss on Diṅnāga's *Pramāṇa-samuccaya*. The *Pramāṇa-vārtika* has four chapters – *Pramāṇa-siddhi, Pratyakṣa, Svārthānumāna* and *Parārthānumāna* – and comprises over 1500 verses; Dharmakīrti has added a *svopajña-vṛtti* (auto-commentary) on the verses, in prose. This *magnum opus* of Dharmakīrti has been elucidated by Devendrabuddhi (Dharmakīrti's disciple), Śākyasiddhi (Dharmakīrti's pupil's pupil), Prajñākaragupta (Dharmakīrti's disciple's disciple's disciple), Karṇakagomin, Manorathanandin and others. A significant verse of the *Pratyakṣa-pariccheda* of the *Pramāṇa-vārtika* and one that has been cited by writers of different schools, such as *Jainism, Nyāya*, *Yoga*, *Mīmāṁsā* and *Vedānta*, is:

avibhāgo'pi buddhyātmā viparyāsita-darśanaiḥ |

grāhya-grāhaka-saṁvitti-bhedavān-iva lakṣyate || (*Pramāṇa-vārtika* 2.354)

[Even though cognition is devoid of division, it is seen by those of deluded understanding as if it has the division of object, knower and knowledge.]

Dharmakīrti and the sub-commentators on the *Pramāṇa-vārtika* such as Prajñākaragupta have not stated or even hinted that this verse or a part thereof is a citation. The Buddhists have not recognized anyone other than Dharmakīrti as its author.

Several reputed non-Buddhist writers of the past have, when presenting Buddhist idealism, specifically quoted Dharmakīrti's '*sahopalambha-niyamād-abhedaḥ…*(absence of difference because of being invariably experienced together...)' verse that was taken up earlier as also the verse presently under consideration. This is indicative of their familiarity with the common authorship of the two verses. Four instances are given below.

(i) In his compendium *Sarvadarśana-saṅgraha*, Mādhava has cited the said two verses jointly in the chapter '*Bauddha-darśana'*, prefacing them with the words, '*yathoktam* (As to this, it is said)'. That Mādhava knew of the logician Dharmakīrti and his works is patent from the fact that a little before the portion referred to, he has written:

tat-kīrtitaṁ dharmakīrtinā 'apratyakṣopalambhasya nārthasiddhiḥ prasiddhyati' iti (*Sarvadarśana-saṅgraha*, *Bauddha-darśana*)

[It has been said by Dharmakīrti, 'There would be no knowledge of an object if cognition were to be unperceived.']

(ii) In his commentary on the *Brahmasūtras*, Bhāskara (an advocate of the *Bhedābheda* school who has attacked Bhagavatpāda's *Brahmasūtra-bhāṣya* and been refuted by Vācaspati-miśra, Anubhūtisvarūpa and Ānandagiri in their sub-commentaries on Bhagavatpāda's *bhāṣya*) has, when presenting Buddhist idealism, written:

tathoktaṁ viprabhikṣuṇā 'apratyakṣopalambhasya nārthasiddhiḥ prasiddhyati' 'avibhāgo'pi buddhyātmā viparyāsita-darśanaiḥ | grāhya-grāhaka-saṁvitti-bhedavān-iva lakṣyate ||' iti …itaśca 'sahopalambha-niyamād-abhedo nila-taddhiyoḥ… (Bhāskara's *bhāṣya* on *Brahma-sūtra* 2.2.28)

[As to this, it has been said by the Brahmin, Buddhist monk, 'There would be no knowledge of an object if cognition were to be unperceived'; 'Even though cognition is devoid of division, it is seen by those of deluded understanding as if it has the division of object, knower and knowledge {the full verse under consideration is cited}'…Further, 'Because of invariably being apprehended together, (the colour) blue and its perception are non-different {Dharmakīrti's verse that was considered earlier is reproduced}'…]

Bhāskara has stated that the verses cited by him are those of 'the Brahmin, Buddhist monk (*vipra-bhikṣu*)' and, as per Tibetan sources, Dharmakīrti was a Brahmin (*vipra*) who turned away from the Vedic path and became a Buddhist monk (*bhikṣu).* It is pertinent that a verse ('*apratyakṣopalambhasya…*') cited here by Bhāskara and that too jointly with the verse under consideration has been explicitly referred to by Mādhava, in *Sarvadarśana-saṅgraha*, as a composition of Dharmakīrti (*'tat-kīrtitaṁ dharmakīrtinā').*

(iii) When presenting and refuting Buddhist *vijñāna-vāda* in the course of his exposition of the Sage Gautama's *Nyāya-sūtra* (1.1.2), Jayanta-bhaṭṭa has written in his authoritative work, *Nyāyamañjarī:*

jñānam-eva grāhya-grāhaka-saṁvitti-bhedena lakṣyate | avidyā-viratau tu svaccham-eva sampadyate…tad-uktaṁ…'avibhāgo'pi buddhyātmā viparyāsita-darśanaiḥ | grāhya-grāhaka-saṁvitti-bhedavāniva lakṣyate' iti…yadapyavarṇi 'sahopalambha niyamād-abhedo nīla-taddhiyoḥ' iti, tadapi bāla-bhāṣitam-iva naḥ pratibhāti | (*Nyāyamañjarī*, *Tattvāloka-prakaraṇa*)

[Knowledge itself appears differentiated as cognised-cognisor-cognisance. On the cessation of ignorance, it becomes spotless…It has been said…'Even though cognition is devoid of division, it is seen by those of deluded understanding as if it has the division of object, knower

and knowledge {the full verse under consideration is cited}.'…Even his description, 'Because of invariably being apprehended together, (the colour) blue and its perception are non-different {the verse considered earlier is cited}', appears to us to be like a child's prattle.]

It is undisputable that Jayanta-bhaṭṭa was conversant with the works of Dharmakīrti, for, in *Nyāyamañjarī*, he has not only cited, on different occasions, verses from Dharmakīrti's works such as *Pramāṇa-vārtika* but also referred to the latter by name and to Dharmakīrti's refinement (in *Nyāyabindu*) of a definition of Diṅnāga {'*lakṣaṇaṁ vaktukāmaḥ pada-yugalam-api nirmame …dṛṣṭam-etat…dharmakīrteḥ* (*Nyāyamañjarī, Pramāṇa-prakaraṇa*)'}.

(iv) In *Prakaraṇa-pañcikā*, Śālikānātha, the leading exponent of the Prabhākara-school of *Mīmāṁsā*, has quoted Dharmakīrti's '*sahopalambha-niyamād-abhedaḥ'* verse and then, with contextual preludes, cited two verses from Dharmakīrti's *Pramāna-vārtika*, later pointed out how '*sahopalambha-niyama*, always being experienced together' is said to imply '*abhedaḥ* non-difference' and followed this up by citing the verse under consideration of the *Pramāṇa-vārtika*. The pertinent portions of the *Prakaraṇa-pañcikā* are:

tad-uktam 'sahopalambha-niyamād-abhedo nīla-taddhiyoḥ' iti...tathāparam-uktam 'paricchedo'ntaranyo'yam…hyupaplavaḥ' iti…tad-uktam 'yadi buddhis-tadākārā…idam-arharti' iti…sahopalambha-niyamena buddher-boddhuśca bhedo nirākriyate bhedasyāniyamavyāptatvāt. vyāpaka-viruddhopalambhena-bādhyamānatvāt. tad-āhuḥ 'avibhāgo'pi buddhyātmā viparyāsita-darśanaiḥ | grāhyagrāhakasaṁvitti-bhedavān-iva lakṣyate' iti (*Prakaraṇa-pañcikā* 6.1; 8)

[It is stated, 'Because of invariably being apprehended together, (the colour) blue and its perception are non-different.'…Likewise, it has also been said, '{Citation of verse 2.212 of the *Pramāṇa-vārtika*}'*…*It is said, '{Citation of verse 2.334 of the *Pramāṇa-vārtika*}'…By the rule of their ever being apprehended together, the difference between cognition and the cognisor is negated, for such difference is unattended by invariable, concurrent apprehension and because it is contradicted by the pervasive, concurrent apprehension. He says, 'Even though cognition is devoid of division, it is seen by those of deluded understanding as if it has the division of object, knower and knowledge {the full verse under consideration is cited}.']

Thus, the verse under consideration is a part of Dharmakīrti's *Pramāṇa-vārtika;* it is not ascribed by the Buddhists to anyone other than Dharmakīrti; and the way some famous, non-Buddhist writers have referenced it confirms Dharmakīrti's authorship of it.

The relevance of this verse of Dharmakīrti in the present context is that Bhagavatpāda has cited it in full in his *Upadeśa-sāhasrī*. In the *Tattvamasi-prakaraṇa* thereof, taking up a Buddhist objection, Bhagavatpāda has written:

anubhuteḥ kim-anyasmin-syāt-tavāpekṣayā vada |

anubhavitarīṣṭā syāt-so'pyanubhūtireva naḥ ||

abhinno'pi hi buddhyātmā viparyāsita-darśanaiḥ |

grāhya-grāhaka-samvitti-bhedavān-iva lakṣyate || (*Upadeśa-sāhasrī* 18.141-142)

[(Objection:) Tell us what you gain by holding that knowledge is dependent on something else.

If you contend that it is desirable that it be dependent on the cognisor, (we respond that) the cognisor too is, according to us, nothing but knowledge. Even though cognition is devoid of division, it is seen by those of deluded understanding as if it has the division of object, knower and knowledge (the verse under consideration is reproduced in its entirety).]

Upadeśa-sāhasrī is accepted by traditionalists and academics as a work of Bhagavatpāda and Sureśvarācārya has respectfully cited it in his *Naiṣkarmya-siddhi.* The above verses are found in all the printed editions and manuscripts containing its *Tattvamasi-prakaraṇa*. In their glosses on the *Upadeśa-sāhasrī*, Ānandagiri and Rāmatīrtha have expatiated on them and explicitly pointed out that a Buddhist objection has been presented here. For instance, Rāmatīrtha has written in his gloss, *Padayojanikā:*

atra kartṛkarmavihīna eva pratyayaḥ svamahimnā bhāsata iti vijñānavādī bauddhaḥ pratyavatiṣṭhate (*Padayojanikā* on *Upadeśa-sāhasrī* 18.141)

[Here, the Buddhist subscribing to *vijñāna-vāda* objects that cognition shines of its own accord without (any distinct) subject and object.]

The corresponding portion of Ānandagiri's gloss is:

uktam-amṛṣyamāṇaḥ śākyaḥ śaṅkate… (*Ṭīkā* on *Upadeśa-sāhasrī* 18.141)

[Without duly reflecting on what has been said (that cognition depends on something else), the Buddhist objects…]

Like Bhagavatpāda, Sureśvarācārya too has cited in its entirety the verse of Dharmakīrti under consideration. He has written in his *Bṛhadāraṇyaka-bhāṣya-vārtika:*

tasyaiva jñāna-mātrasya grāhya-grāhaka-lakṣaṇaṁ |

malaṁ prakalpya tat-svāsthyaṁ śuddhiṁ vyācakṣate'pare ||

abhinno'pi hi buddhyātmā viparyāsita-buddhibhiḥ |

grāhya-grāhaka-saṁvitti-bhedavāniva lakṣyate || (*Bṛhadāraṇyaka-bhāṣya-vārtika* 4.3.473-476)

[Others (the Buddhists) conceive of impurity in the form of the cognisor and cognised in that which is just knowledge and speak of decontamination consisting in its being just knowledge. Even though cognition is devoid of division, it is seen by those of deluded understanding as if it has the division of object, knower and knowledge (the verse under consideration is cited in full).]

Explaining this, Ānandagiri has explicitly pointed out in his sub-commentary, *Śāstra-prakāśikā*, that Sureśvarācārya has referred to the position of the Buddhist idealists and cited the words of Dharmakīrti. The pertinent portion of Ānandagiri's gloss is:

apare iti vijñāna-vādinām-evoktiḥ…tat-kalpitatve kīrti-vākyam-udāharati abhinno'pīti.

[(The verse with) '*apare* (others)' refers to the claim of the *vijñāna-vādins* (Buddhist idealists) themselves…With regard to the distinction of knower and known being imaginary, he cites the words of Dharmakīrti, "Even though without division…"]

Thus, Bhagavatpāda in his *Upadeśa-sāhasrī* and Sureśvarācārya in his *Bṛhadāraṇyaka-bhāṣya-*

vārtika have cited in full a verse whose author is, without doubt, the renowned Buddhist logician Dharmakīrti. Hence, their period cannot be before that of Dharmakīrti.

4.3 Sureśvarācārya's Referencing and Naming Dharmakīrti

In his *Bṛhadāraṇyaka-bhāṣya-vārtika*, Sureśvarācārya has mentioned a Buddhist position about valid grounds of inference, critically analysed it and explicitly referred to it as Dharmakīrti's proposition. He has drawn attention to the Buddhist portion as follows:

avinābhāva-siddhyarthaṁ nanvidaṁ varṇyate trayam |

triṣveva tvavinābhāvād-bhadram tairapi kīrtitam || (*Bṛhadāraṇyaka-bhāṣya-vārtika* 4.3.742)

[This triad (comprising intrinsic nature, effect and non-apprehension) is indeed described for the establishment of invariable concomitance (that is pertinent for a ground of inference). It has been stated well even by them (the Buddhists) that this is because of invariable concomitance being obtainable in only the triad (of intrinsic nature, effect and non-apprehension).]

In his sub-commentary, *Śāstra-prakāśikā*, Ānandagiri has, as follows, pointed out that in the above verse, the view of the Buddhists as advanced by Dharmakīrti has been referred to and has also cited the relevant verse of Dharmakīrti's *Pramāṇa-vārtika:*

svabhāvāder-avinābhāva-sādhakatvaṁ bauddhair-api vyākhyātam-ityāha – triṣveveti. yatra svabhāvādyasti tatrāvinābhāvo yathā śiśapā-vṛkṣādiṣv-ataḥ svabhāvādy-avinābhāva-dvārā'numity-aṅgatvād-arthavad-iti tair-uktam | yathāha kīrtiḥ 'pakṣa-dharmas-tadamśena vyāpto hetus-tridhaiva saḥ | avinābhāva-niyamāddhetvābhāsās-tato'pare' iti | (*Śāstra-prakāśikā* 4.3.742)

['*triṣveva…'* - (In this portion of the verse), he says that the Buddhists too have propounded that intrinsic nature, etc., give rise to invariable concomitance. Wherever there is intrinsic nature, etc., (i.e. wherever there is intrinsic nature, effect or non-apprehension), there is invariable concomitance, such as between a *śiṁśapā* (a kind of tree) and a tree. Hence, via invariable concomitance, intrinsic nature and the rest form a constituent of an inference and, so, are relevant. As to this, Dharmakīrti has said, "By virtue of the rule of invariable concomitance, a ground of inference pervaded by an attribute of the subject of inference is of just three kinds (intrinsic nature, effect and non-apprehension). Hence, grounds of inference other than these three are fallacious reasons (*Pramāṇa-vārtika* 1.3)."]

The third verse of the *Svārthānumāna-pariccheda* of the *Pramāna-vārtika* as also Dharmakīrti's '*svopajña-vṛtti* (auto-commentary)' on it are taken into consideration by Sureśvarācārya in his subsequent critical analysis of Dharmakīrti's contention.

Following his critical analysis, Sureśvarācārya has explicitly referred to Dharmakīrti as follows:

triṣveva-tvavinābhāvād-iti yad-dharmakīrtinā |

pratyajñāyi pratijñeyam hīyetāsau na samśayaḥ || (4.3.753)

[The proposition asserted by Dharmakīrti that (a valid ground of inference is of just three kinds) since invariable concomitance occurs in only the triad (comprising intrinsic nature, effect and non-apprehension) would undoubtedly fail.]

It is thus patent that Sureśvarācārya has referenced Dharmakīrti's view, critically analysed it and unambiguously stated that it is what Dharmakīrti has asserted. So, Sureśvarācārya cannot have predated the influential Buddhist logician, Dharmakīrti.

5. Conclusion

Apropos the period of Bhagavatpāda, two forms of internal evidence were objectively examined in depth; one is his reference to the *kārṣāpaṇa*-coin and the other is his rebuttal of Buddhist *vijñāna-vāda*.

Bhagavatpāda's mention of the *kārṣāpaṇa*-coin in his *Māṇḍukyopaniṣad-kārikā-bhāṣya* and in his *Brahmasūtra-bhāṣya* does not imply that the *kārṣāpaṇa* must have been in circulation in his time. This is because any writer can well proffer as an example something that is not in vogue in his time but with which people are familiar; such an example would satisfy even the formal definition of an illustration contained in Sage Gautama's *Nyāya-sūtras.* As for the *kārṣāpaṇa*, it has been spoken of in the *Veda, Smṛti* and *Purāṇa* themselves as also in authoritative scriptural treatises, in traditional *kośas* and in the literature and, thus, has been well-known for long. Moreover, it has been referred to by authors even long after it ceased to be in circulation. Even if it were biasedly speculated that the *kārṣāpaṇa* must have been in circulation in his time, it would not follow that Bhagavatpāda lived centuries before Christ, for this coin was in circulation not only before but even centuries after the start of the Christian era. Thus, Bhagavatpāda's period cannot be arrived at on the basis of his referring to the *kārṣāpaṇa* by way of an example.

It was determined that Bhagavatpāda has decidedly cited the influential Buddhist logician Diṅnāga in his *Brahmasūtra-bhāṣya*. It follows that he did not antedate Diṅnāga. Next, it was conclusively ascertained that: (a) Bhagavatpāda has cited and refuted the eminent Buddhist logician Dharmakīrti in his *Brahmasūtra-bhāṣya;* (b) Bhagavatpāda and Sureśvarācārya have, in the *Upadeśa-sāhasrī* and *Bṛhadāraṇyaka-bhāṣya-vārtika* respectively, reproduced in full a verse of Dharmakīrti; and (c) Sureśvarācārya has referenced and named Dharmakīrti in the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka-bhāṣya-vārtika*. So, there is no question of Bhagavatpāda and Sureśvarācārya having flourished before Dharmakīrti.

*****

Appendix

Some Observations about the periods of Diṅnāga and Dharmakīrti

1. I-Tsing (now spelt as Yijing), the Chinese Buddhist scholar whose travels were in the period 629-645 AD and who collected many Buddhist texts during his long stay in India, has recorded, "They are to be likened to the sun and the moon or are to be regarded as dragon and elephant. Such were Nagarjuna, Deva, Asvaghosha of an early age; Vasubandhu, Asanga, Sangabhadra, Bhavaviveka in the middle ages; and Guna, Dharmapala, Dharmakirti, Silabhadra, Simhakandra, Sthiramati, Gunamati, Pragnagupta, Gunaprabha, Ginaprabha of late years {A Record of the Buddhist Religion as Practised in India and the Malay Archipelago (A.D. 671-695) by I-Tsing, Translated by J. Takakusu, Oxford, 1896 p. 181}. In a footnote, the translator Takakusu has conveyed that the Chinese characters of I-Tsing's text that have been translated as 'early age',

'middle ages' and 'late years' literally mean 'remote', 'middle' and 'recent' respectively. Thus, writing in the seventh century AD, I-Tsing, refers to Dharmakīrti as a 'recent' leading light.

In his list of recent teachers, I-Tsing has mentioned Śīlabhadra, Dharmapāla, Sthiramati and Guṇamati along with Dharmakīrti. Hieun Tsang (now spelt as Xuanzang), the Chinese Buddhist scholar, whose travels were in the period 629-645 AD, reports that he learnt from Śīlabhadra and, thus, the latter must have been alive in the first half of the seventh century AD. Dharmapāla was, points out Hieun Tsang, the teacher of Śīlabhadra and so, cannot be placed before the sixth century AD. Hieun Tsang has mentioned the association of Dharmapāla, Guṇamati and Sthiramati with the famed academy at Nālanda. Sthiramati has penned commentaries on the *Yogācāra* and *Abhidharma* works of Vasubandhu and has written in his *Abhidharmakośa-bhāṣya-ṭīkā* that his teacher was Guṇamati. Hieun Tsang's disciple Kuiji (632-682 AD), who penned short biographies of ten Buddhist masters, has stated that Sthiramati was from South India, was Guṇamati's disciple and was an elder contemporary of Dharmapāla. As Sthiramati was a student of Guṇamati and was an elder contemporary of Dharmapāla, Sthiramati and Guṇamati too must have been alive in the sixth century AD. So, from the Chinese records, it is patent that Dharmakīrti, who was listed (in the seventh century AD) along with Śīlabhadra, Dharmapāla, Sthiramati and Guṇamati as a recent teacher must have lived several centuries after the start of the Christian era.

2. It is undisputed and recognised by scholars of *Nyāya* from even the words of Vācaspati-miśra that: (a) Sage Gautama's *Nyāya-sūtras* and Vātsyāyana's *bhāṣya* on them were attacked by the Buddhist logician Diṅnāga and defended against Diṅnāga's attack by Udyotakara in his *Nyāya-vārtika;* (b) Dharmakīrti attacked Udyotakara's *Nyāya-vārtika* and defended Diṅnāga's position; and (c) in his *Nyāya-vārtika-tātparya-ṭīkā*, Vācaspati-miśra strongly attacked Diṅnāga and Dharmakīrti and defended *Udyotakara's Nyāya-vārtika*. Almost at the start of his *Nyāya-vārtika-tātparya-ṭīkā*, Vācaspati has explicitly referred to Diṅnāga as a recent writer thus:

…*diṅnāga-prabhṛtibhir-arvācīnaiḥ kuhetusantamasa-samutthāpanena*…

(*Nyāya-vārtika-tātparya-ṭīkā*)

(…due to the raising up of the darkness of fallacious reasons by recent ones headed by Diṅnāga…)

It is well-known that Vācaspati-miśra flourished in the ninth century AD; from his own words at the close of his *Nyāya-kaṇikā*, it is discernible that he completed this work in 841 AD. Decidedly, Vācaspati's speaking of Diṅnāga as recent would be apt only if Diṅnāga – and thus, even Dharmakīrti who defended Diṅnāga – lived after the dawn of the Christian era. Moreover, were it to be conjectured that Diṅnāga and Dharmakīrti lived centuries before Christ, not only would the accuracy of Vācaspati's statement have to be called into question, it would have to be unjustifiably conceived that the *Nyāya-sūtras* and Vātsyāyana's *bhāṣya* were defended against the severe criticism of these Buddhist logicians only after the lapse of over a millennium.

~~~~
~~~~